Message from the President

“Can I Have it All?”

I don’t know about you, but I try to be the best librarian, the best boss, the best co-worker, the best friend, the best wife, the best mother, the best daughter; and I am failing horribly. Just the other day, I was having a conversation and I stated, “If I have things organized and running smoothly at work; everything at home is in disarray and I can’t seem to get things together.”

For years now, there has been a myth that “women can have it all.” I would like to go a step further and say that there is a new myth that “everyone has to excel at everything in their life.” With the advancement of technology there is countless ways to stay connected and complete tasks at work. You can contact someone via phone, email; text, skype, twitter, Facebook, and the list go on. With all these advancements we have been promised that our life will be easier, simpler, and able to multi-task better. I seem to be not only behind in my phone and email messages, but now patrons are reaching out to me in so many ways; I feel like I can’t keep up.

By now, you probably think this article is an excuse for me to whine? On the contrary, this article is a call to embrace your weaknesses and faults.

The myth of “having it all” is just that, a myth. No one person can be the go-to person for all the contacts that they have in their personal and career life. As librarians, we need to embrace our limitations and ask for help. Yet, why is that so hard to do? I think it might have something to with the fact that we have bought into the nay-sayers myth that libraries are obsolete. Libraries are trying to be the end-all stop for our communities. Don’t get me wrong; I want to go the extra mile for my community, but we need to stop beating ourselves up if we cannot fulfill every need that a patron has. I have more patrons in my library now than before the outpour of modern technology. More than ever my patrons need my assistance and rely on my expertise.

Just recently, I fell behind in my MLA presidential duties. I was overwhelmed by the different directions in which I was being pulled.

(continued on p. 2)
Since last November, my husband has a chronic illness that has made me the sole breadwinner so that I am currently working multiple jobs. This summer there was a horrible storm that caused damage to my library. My branch library has needed repair for years and now I have the amazing possibility of doing something major in the upkeep of the building. The Glendive Public library is currently running understaffed and I am running multiple programs weekly until we are able to hire the right candidate. I also had the usual daily duties of dealing with patrons, and even had to contact law enforcement for assistance. I kept trying to pull myself up by my proverbial boot straps, and get things done but it just wasn’t happening. Why during all this, didn’t I just ask for help? Why was I so hell bent to prove that I was worthy and I could get it all done on my own?

I finally came clean to my fellow board members and let them know that I was falling behind and would probably need assistance. Instantly, before any of them commented I felt relief, like a huge weight had been lifted off of me. When some of them replied, the replies were positive and with support and encouragement. So why did I wait so long to let them know I needed help?

I would like to say I’ve learned my lesson and that in the future I will ask for assistance before I get so far behind, but if I’m honest with myself I know I may repeat history. I think being honest with myself is the first step to better career habits. Since all this stress has come in my life; I have quit two community boards that I use to currently be on. I am still on other boards in my community and regionally, but it has been very freeing to let go of some of my duties.

My wish for you is that you know that you are not alone. I think many of us in this profession are perfectionists. I see perfectionism as one of our greatest strengths and also as one of our weaknesses. I hope that you can see that you are wonderful, warts and all. As a profession, we do not need to “do it all”. I encourage you to strive for your personal best, but also love yourself where you are at now. Personally, I like you the way you are. Repeat after me, “I’m good enough. I’m smart enough. And doggone it, people like me.” --Stuart Smalley, Saturday Night Live Character.

Dawn Kingstad, President
(406) 377-3633
booksrus@midrivers.com

MPLA Updates
By Eileen Wright, MPLA Representative

Calling all fellows, applications are now being sought for the upcoming 2016 MPLA Leadership Institute

May 15-20, 2016 @ YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado

What other fellows have said about their experience at the Leadership Institute:

"The MPLA Leadership Institute turned out to be the single most gratifying and relevant experience of my library career."

"The MPLA Leadership Institute re-energized me professionally and personally, and best of all, it reminded me why I love being a librarian."

"What an extraordinary opportunity for learning, laughing and leadership!"

Get your application in today, and join other librarians for an experience of a lifetime with facilitator Maureen Sullivan:

The 10th MPLA Leadership Institute will again be facilitated by nationally known organizational development consultant Maureen Sullivan. Ms. Sullivan has over 25 years of experience in leadership development and is the Past President of the American Library Association. She helped establish the ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute and is a faculty member for its annual program.

For more information, visit: mplauservices/mpla-leadership-institute/

Need money to attend the MPLA conference or another professional conference, workshop, seminar, or training? Professional Development money is available for MPLA members, which can be used towards all of these. For full details, check out this link: mplaus-committees/profdev/grants.html
**PNLA Update**  
By Carmen Clark  
PNLA Representative

I was fortunate enough to attend this year’s PNLA conference in Vancouver, WA. There were approximately 180-190 attendees and about 31 vendors. I saw a few faces from Montana, but not many. I would like to invite you all to the next conference which will be held August 3rd-5th, 2016 in Calgary, Alberta. Save the date! Put it on your calendar now!

I immensely enjoyed hearing from “The Strongest Librarian in the World” Josh Hanagarne, as well as YA author Roland Smith and local author Jim Lynch. I learned about the Yacolt Library Express, which in essence is a library without staff (interesting concept), as well as how to translate failure into success.

**Authors wanted!**

**PNLA Quarterly**  
The official journal of the Pacific Northwest Library Association  
**Call for Submissions and Author Instructions**  
**Winter 2016 Issue**

**New Voices** is the focus of the winter issue of *PNLA Quarterly* (80.2, Winter 2016). For this issue we invite LIS students, new professionals, and those who work closely with new librarians and library staff in the PNLA region (Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, and Washington) to submit content. Articles may be theoretical, research-based, or practice-focused. We especially encourage authors to draw on fresh perspectives, explore future visions, and pose wildly innovative ideas.

**Deadline for submissions to pqeditors@gmail.com is January 15, 2016.**

**Other Upcoming Dates:**  
PNLA LEADS October 25-30, 2015 in Longview, Washington  
PNLA 2016 August 3rd-5th, 2016 in Calgary, Alberta

---

**A Warm Welcome & “Get Outside the Lines”**  
By Susan Gregory  
Director  
Bozeman Public Library

The Bozeman Public Library staff welcomed our new Head of Reference & Adult Services, Kit Stephenson, the first week of September. She replaces Terri Dood, the former Head of Reference, who retired after 35 years with the City of Bozeman in June. Kit was the Regional Library Manager for the Delta County Libraries System in Paonia, Colorado. Prior to her nine years of work in that system, she was a Teen Librarian at the Nashville Public Library and also worked as a librarian in Vermont. Kit and her husband have moved to Bozeman and have a teenage son. We are excited to have Kit join our Library team!

The Bozeman Public Library and Library Foundation participated in the national “Get Outside the Lines” campaign on Sept. 13-20 with our own “It’s Happening” campaign. Library and Foundation staff visited the five local breweries in town promoting the Library as a fun, happening place for live music, yoga, Minecraft, and lots of other entertainment – as well as a great place to find books. Doug Weber from Mammoth Marketing designed t-shirts and beer coasters, and we encouraged customers to take selfies, share their post with the hashtag #itshappeningBPL, and enter to win a beer gift pack. The week ended with a live concert on the lawn by local band Modern Sons as well as a beer garden and food trucks.
School Library Division Update

By Niki Keuch
SLD Co-Chair

SLD Retreat

Thanks to everyone who helped make the School Librarian Division Retreat a success! Thirty-six teacher-librarians from as far northwest as Libby and as far east as Baker, met in Bozeman on August 12, for a day of professional development and networking.

The program included the following sessions: An MLA Overview by Sheila Bonnand; Communicating and Collaborating by Dr. Ann Eubank; Informational Literacy Instruction by Colet Bartow; Digital Citizenship by Marion Gilbert of Rosen Digital; and Collection Development by Niki Keuch. At the end of the sessions, Nikki Young and Rita Kroon, teacher-librarians from the Bozeman School District, provided tours of their school libraries. The retreat was a success because these people volunteered to present sessions and because 36 teacher librarians made the drive to Bozeman to attend the event.

Plans for another SLD retreat will be taking place over this school year. If you would like to be involved in the planning, please contact Niki Keuch at nkeuch@gmail.com or Lynde Roberts at robertslr@billingsschools.org. In order to make the next retreat relevant and dynamic for teacher-librarians, we will be sending out another survey to gather your input on what topics should be addressed.

Register for the MEA-MFT Conference in Billings

Thanks to the MLA board passing an action item last spring, teacher-librarians may now renew their MLA membership for the discounted price of $40 while registering online for the MEA-MFT Conference. The goal of this change was to increase the SLD membership by making membership renewal more convenient.

At the conference, 10 sessions were submitted under MLA. That’s twice the number of MLA submissions from last year! Come support your fellow librarians by attending their sessions.

MLA and MATELA co-sponsored the keynote speaker, author Alan Sitomer. Sitomer has written 16 books for young adults and children. His YA books are known for appealing to reluctant readers. Hope to see many of you at his keynote presentation.

406 Tech Billings Summit, October 31

If you want to effectively use Google Apps with your students, the 406 Tech Billings Summit featuring Google for Education is the professional development you need. For information about registering, go to 406 Tech Summit.

---

Published in the New Ohio Review: “A Whole Lot of Men with Guns”

By Jonathan Muzzall
Public Desk Assistant
Lewis & Clark Library


If you’d like to report a recent publication or other professional development for celebration in the FOCUS, please drop us a line at: caroline@missoula.lib.mt.us or kendram@polson.lib.mt.us.
Frances Henne/YALSA/VOYA Call for Submissions
By Stephanie Barta
Young Adult Librarian
Westerly Public Library

2016 Frances Henne/YALSA/VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) Research Grant

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), the fastest growing division of the American Library Association (ALA), is offering the Frances Henne/YALSA/VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) Research Grant for 2016. This grant of $1,000 provides seed money for small-scale projects that will encourage research that responds to the YALSA Research Agenda.

Details regarding the applications for the 2016 Frances Henne YALSA/VOYA Research Grant are available from the YALSA Website at http://www.ala.org/yalsa/awardsandgrants/franceshenne. Applications for the grant are due in the YALSA Office by December 1, 2015. For more information please contact us via e-mail, yalsa@ala.org; or by phone: 1-800-545-2433 x 4387.

Reminder: MLA Dues are Due
By Debbie Kramer
Executive Director
Montana Library Association

Just a quick, friendly reminder that if you haven’t paid your dues for the 2015-16 membership year you need to get them paid in order to take advantage of membership discounts for the ASLD/PLD Retreat in beautiful Chico Hot Springs, October 18 & 19, 2015. Go to the MLA website: www.mtlib.org. Click on the Directory link and the MLA MEMBERSHIP link or mtlib.org/Directory/mla_membership.pdf Check to see if your dues have been paid if you don’t know for sure. Thanks.

Memories of Marje
By Mary Drew Powers
Public Relations/Reference Librarian
Missoula Public Library

The Library Universe in Montana is a small one, thus many of you know Marje Doyle, Reference Librarian from Missoula Public Library. Marje will be retiring in November, and we at MPL are hoping to find someone who can fill her Danskos. Thus:

Job Posting:

Reference Librarian at Missoula Public Library: to replace one M. Doyle, retiring in November. Work as part of a cohesive team to provide excellent customer service, collection development, database evaluation and other duties as noted. Special preference given to those with good recipe for bacon scones. Please attach recipe with transcripts.

(continued on next page)
**Essential duties:**
- answer Reference questions up to and including calling Europe for the answer.
- interview, train, and coordinate volunteers and plan annual Volunteer Appreciation breakfast with speeches, awards, and statistics.
- Successfully teach Diebrarians to do book cart drills fifteen minutes before the parade.
- Deliver to homebound patrons monthly, anticipating their requests because you know what they like.
- Train Community Service volunteers—who leave and are replaced within two weeks—to enter Vital Records data from the Missoulian.
- Declare “Crazy Sock Week” and “Cartoon Tie Week.”
- Organize Active Aging Week biannually with 30 events in one week reserving the ones that you want to attend for your day off.
- Know which keys go where.
- Be the Passport Acceptance Agent that everyone else goes to when they’re in a J.A.M.*
- ditto for Notary Public.
- Be the last Reference Librarian standing who knows for sure what’s what in the Montana Room.
- Cover the Children’s Dept. when needed.
- Cover Web Alley when needed.
- Empty the Book Drop when needed.
- There’s more, but we forget.
- Other duties as needed.

**Minimum Qualifications:**
MLIS degree.

**Preferred Qualifications:**
- Have parties at your house.
- Spouse and children who volunteer at the library.
- Large wardrobe of “crazy socks” and Looney Tune ties.
- Be able to help any other staff member out of a J.A.M.*

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**
- Answer questions as briefly as possible with the utmost precision.
- Ability to say “Happy Monday” at morning briefing with no sarcasm whatsoever.
- No fear of individuals who intimidate bigger people than you while exhibiting reasonable caution.
- Ability to rearrange 31-person schedule while reviewing HVAC settings and calling 911.

**Supplemental Information:**
Please supply answers to the following questions:

Are you a good baker, and do you enjoy baking on a regular basis?
Under what circumstances would you consider it appropriate to bring a homemade treat for your coworkers to work?

*J.A.M. - Procedure for those situations which require that you Just Ask Marje.

---

**LEFT:** Ready for Festival of the Dead, 2012

**RIGHT:** Presenting Volunteer of the Year Award, 2015
WTC Awarded Libri Foundation Grant
Alison Pomerantz
Secretary
Whitefish Community Library Board

Whitefish, MT—September 21, 2015: Thanks to a generous grant by the Libri Foundation and Bill Strawbridge and Meg Wallhagen, the Whitefish Community Library is able to purchase new children’s books valued at more than $1,400.

Since being founded in 1989 as a nationwide, non-profit organization, the Libri Foundation’s overarching goal is to help as many rural libraries as possible with its “Books for Children Program.” The Foundation, by matching funds raised by the local Friends of the Library or other local organizations, enables a library to obtain new, hardcover children’s books it could not otherwise acquire due to budgetary constraints.

For the past 25 years, the Foundation has donated over $5.25 million worth of new children’s books to more than 3,000 libraries in all 50 states. The Foundation supports the concept that children who learn to enjoy reading at an early age continue to read throughout their lives. In order to develop a love of reading, children must have access to books that stretch their imaginations, touch their emotions, and expand their horizons.

"Whitefish Community Library is grateful to have been selected for this grant,” said WCL Director Joey Kositzky. “In addition to the 80 books, we also received Bill Strawbridge and Meg Wallhagen’s gift of $350 new math and science books. This will impact our young people’s access to picture, juvenile and juvenile non-fiction materials immensely.”

Visit whitefishlibrary.org for more information on hours, programs and other news about the Whitefish Community Library or Like WCL on Facebook.

///

Sidney-Richland County Library Joins the Race
By Kelly Reisig
Director
Sidney-Richland County Public Library

Sidney-Richland County Library joined over 250 libraries and organizations around the world to celebrate Outside the Lines. Outside the Lines is a week-long celebration – Sept. 13-19, 2015 – demonstrating the creativity and innovation happening in libraries.

“We wanted a fun community-wide event that appealed to all ages and served as a platform for discussion about current services and programs, and how we can dynamically adapt and answer to the needs of citizens throughout Richland County in the future”, said Kelly Reisig, Director.
The library held its first “Sidney’s Amazing Race”. Contestants started the race at the library with their first clue. Each clue in the game was structured the same. The top portion of the clue page cited an exciting program or service currently offered at the library. The bottom portion of the sheet listed the clue to the next clue box location. A total of 12 non-profit organizations and businesses participated across the community. When participants reached their last location (the local newspaper office), they were directed to head back to the pit stop at the library. Once at the library they encountered a road block. During this challenge participants looked for little gnomes hidden among the stacks in the library. Once they located their gnome they could head to the pit stop mat, located by the circulation desk, and declare victory. This was a non-elimination race so everyone who finished had a chance to win a prize. They were also recognized on the Amazing Race Wall of Fame (located in the library entrance), and their successful finish was announced on the library’s Facebook page.

There were no time limits and people were invited to participate in teams or as individuals. As a result, participation represented a wide array of individuals. Friends and co-workers formed teams. Family groups joined in, as well as many individuals of all ages. “One of the days we had light rain. I saw a girl riding her bicycle down Central Avenue, clutching her clue envelope tightly as she rode from place to place. Our whole team cheered out loud when we actually drew her name for first place. She certainly earned it!” said Reisig.

Three names were randomly drawn among the finalists. ChamberBucks in increments of $25, $50 and $100 were given to the 3rd, 2nd and 1st place winners respectively. ChamberBucks are gift certificates available through the Chamber of Commerce. The certificates can be spent at any local Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce location. This ensured the money stayed local which served as another way to support the local businesses.

“We certainly generated a lot of comments and discussion. It was very exciting. One local restaurant owner got a new library card, signed up for Montana Library 2 Go for his Kindle and by week’s end he had signed up 3 more people plus encouraged his employees and their families to participate in the race. That one owner easily increased our awareness by more than a dozen new people, and that’s what this was all about”, explained Reisig.
Introducing . . . our new Airport Campus Library:

As of this August, books and magazines are right where they need to be for easy access for students and faculty in the technology programs housed on that campus: welding, aviation, diesel, metals, automotive. We also have a library kiosk with touch links to resource guides for each program as well as links to library instruction. Jessie Pate and I are on site “on demand” to offer library instruction and “book a librarian” sessions, and we go over a couple of scheduled times each week to offer reference assistance and make sure all is in order. Mary Ann George, our library tech, worked with the administrative assistant on the Airport Campus to load our Voyager circulation module onto her computer to enable students there to check out books. Shelley Ramberg, at the University of Montana – Missoula, set up a delivery location for the campus so borrowers can place holds on Helena College and UM affiliate materials, receive requested items and check them out there.

Voila! . . . much needed library services are now available!
How to Host a VISTA in 10 Easy Steps
By Desirée Funstan
Reference Librarian
Missoula Public Library

If you’ve heard about the impact of the AmeriCorps*Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program in Montana and wondered how you could tap into the resource, this article is for you. I have had the great pleasure of supervising several VISTA members in two public libraries, and I will say that any library can benefit by utilizing this invaluable resource. Read on for ten easy steps to hosting a VISTA member in your library.

1. **Identify a need** – VISTA was started in 1965 with the goal of alleviating poverty in the United States. As we know, illiteracy is highly correlated with poverty. Because the fundamental purpose of a library is to support literacy, the work we do every day is in line with VISTA’s goal. Take a broad view of your community to identify a poverty issue that could be ameliorated through literacy support.

2. **Develop a project** – You probably already have something in mind, a project you’ve been putting off until you have more time, more money, more staff, more grey hair, whatever. Think about that project in terms of the need you’ve identified and VISTA’s goal of alleviating poverty. Does your project meet the need and work toward the goal? Bingo. You’ve got a VISTA project.

3. **Understand “indirect service”** – Two buzz phrases related to VISTA are capacity building and ensuring sustainability. VISTA members build the capacity of their programs by recruiting and training volunteers, securing funding and developing community partnerships, to name a few activities. The member serves behind the scenes to ensure that the program will be sustainable after the year of service ends. The member does not teach classes, lead story times, serve food to needy children or perform any other direct service activities. Your VISTA member will spend their time building the capacity of a program that eventually will be sustained without ongoing VISTA support.

4. **Consider the cost match** – Currently, participation in the program requires an $8,000 cost match, which can be paid in four installments. This seems like a lot of money, especially for a library budget. But consider what you’re getting: a full-time, college-educated person who will spend a year at your library, completely immersed in your important project. Do the math to figure out what you would pay a full-time employee for a year (don’t forget payroll expenses and benefits) and you’ll see that the VISTA program is an incredible bargain.

5. **Contact a VISTA sponsoring organization** – There are several sponsoring organizations in Montana that place VISTA members in non-profits across the state. Two of these, Montana Campus Compact and the Billings Metro Project, work with libraries as host sites. You will find links to these organizations at the end of this article. Take a look at their websites to learn more about their host site application requirements and deadlines.

6. **Apply** – Complete the host site application carefully and completely. Don’t be afraid to contact your sponsoring organization if you need help. The sponsors want you to host a VISTA member and will do what they can to make sure that happens.

7. **Recruit and interview** – Your host site application was approved; congratulations! Now things really get exciting. Your library’s VISTA position will be advertised on the AmeriCorps website, but you should recruit locally, as well. You can advertise your VISTA position through the local Job Service Workforce center, in the newspaper, on craigslist, through social media, etc. Potential VISTA members will apply for your position through the AmeriCorps website, and then your sponsoring organization will interview them. If the sponsor determines that the applicant is qualified for your position, their information will be forwarded to you. This is a busy time for you as the VISTA site supervisor. You will receive numerous applications from bright, enthusiastic people who are excited about serving for a year on your project. Bask in the flood of applications and revel in the delight of interviewing many talented candidates.

8. **Extend an offer** – The most difficult part of the process will be choosing just one candidate. Once you’ve made your decision, you’ll let the sponsoring organization know. They will then contact the candidate and offer them the position. Once they accept, you can start preparing for their arrival.

9. **Orient and supervise** – VISTA members often come from out-of-state to serve their terms of service. During their first few weeks, it is critical for you to orient them not just to your project and your library, but to your community, as well. Take them

(continued on next page)
on a tour of your town, buy them lunch, introduce them to the movers and shakers, and point them toward services they will
need to utilize during their stay. This is also the time to go over the volunteer assignment description and your expectations
for the year of service.

When orientation is complete, your VISTA member will be ready to jump into your project. For the remainder of the year, you
will meet with the member at least once a week, provide support and guidance, and supervise their progress. You will also
have several meetings with the sponsoring organization and complete a year-end report and evaluation.

10. **Achieve results** – If your experience is similar to mine, your VISTA member will accomplish more than you would have thought
possible during the year of service. Before you know it, that important project that you couldn’t have done on your own will
take shape. Pat yourself (and your VISTA member) on the back; you’ve had a positive impact on your community!

**Helpful websites:**

If you have questions, please contact me at desireed@missoula.lib.mt.us or 406-721-2665.

- /// -

---

**Montana State Library Certification Program: How does Montana stack up?**

By Joann Flick, MS Ed.,

CE Coordinator

Montana State Library

Twenty-four states offer a certification program for librarians; of those nineteen require public library directors to maintain a
current certification, and eleven require certification for some library staff as well. Nineteen require college coursework as part of
the certification process. On average, state requirements work out to fourteen credits per year. Some states charge a fee for
processing certifications: up to $80; nine states (including Montana) charge no fee.

Montana’s certification program requirements for public libraries are ensconced in the Montana Public Library Standards. The
State Library requires that all public library directors attain certification within four years of starting their position and that they
renew their certification every four years after that. For all other staff or those that work at other types of libraries, certification is
voluntary. Montana also offers certification for public library board members.

Here’s a quick comparison of our requirements to nearby/similar states:

**Montana:** mandatory director certification – 60 credit hours/4 years (or a recent master’s degree in library science); no
academic requirement, renewal every four years, no cost

**Wyoming:** no certification program

**South Dakota:** no certification program

**North Dakota:** no certification program

**Idaho:** no certification program; Idaho encourages library staff without formal academic training to take their online ABLE/
SABLE courses

(continued on next page)
For Montana, the certification program and mandatory requirement are intended to ensure that public library boards support the professional development of their staff through continuing education. We don’t have a graduate degree in library science offered in our state, and the job of library director in our small towns could be a part-time job, often at a relatively low hourly wage for a professional. Add to those conditions, many of our smallest libraries have little funding available for staff to travel. For all of these reasons, the State Library has worked to increase the number, scope, and quality of online learning opportunities available anytime, anyplace and at no cost and to make sure that at least some face-to-face training is available nearby from time-to-time. A determined new library director can complete their certification requirements in a few months, just by viewing a few archived webinars each week or working their way through online courses like the ABLE and SABLE courses from the Idaho State Library. Certification is more attainable than ever.

The State Library supports on-site face-to-face training as well, sponsoring a Fall Workshops each year, providing on-site database training regularly and developing and presenting training at Public Library Federation meetings. Members of the Montana Shared Catalog enjoy access to additional training provided by the MSC trainer, Jessie Goodwin. The Montana Memory project sponsors training from the Digital Public Library of America. Our cadre of public library consultants: Lauren, Suzanne, and Pam, are available to present at staff development days or library board meetings. Altogether, MSL provides close to 200 hours of no-charge onsite training across the state in a typical calendar year and at least 30 new webinars each year. Add to that the dozens of webinars presented by other providers each month (see my blog for the monthly list: msltrainer.wordpress.com) and you can be sure that there are a lot of learning opportunities out there. If we are going to mandate certification for public library directors, we feel we must provide every opportunity for library directors to attain that standard.

Our certification program is trending up. While just a few years ago, applications averaged 40 or 50 per year, we are currently on track to issue close to 100 this year. Part of the reason for this trend may be the ease of acquiring credit through online webinars, or perhaps librarians simply see the value in continuing education and enjoy having the credential to show for their work. Some libraries and library boards offer incentives to staff to seek and maintain their certification. Maybe it’s the purple ribbons we provide to acknowledge librarians with current certifications at MLA. Whatever the reason, it sure is a great trend.

The requirements for librarian certification are 60 credit hours within a 4 year period. At least 10 credits in each of four categories:

- **Library administration** (Directors are required to have at least 20 credits in this category)
- **Collection management and technical services**
- **Library services to the public**
- **Technology**

For all of the training provided by MSL, MLA and our partners here in Montana, CE events are listed in the CE Tracker within the MT Library Directory and need to be just checked. All training received beyond that master list can be entered manually. Librarian must claim their profile in the Library Directory to enter and manage their own CE.

A year ago, the State Library instituted an online application process to help manage this increase, gain better data, reduce errors in our record-keeping, and, hopefully, ease the process for applicants as well. There are no more reports to print, no more signatures to obtain, no more bulky packages to ship off to me at the State Library. Instead, applicants log into their profile in the MT Library Directory, they select the CE Tracker, post all of the credits they have earned and when they have met all the requirements for certification, they complete a simple online form and hit the submit button. The final step is verification: applicants select their supervisor to verify that they have made a valid claim of credit. Because of the verification requirement, applicants are advised that they should keep records of their professional development activities should their supervisor request documentation. The verifier sends an email to the State Library and the application is processed in the next quarterly batch.

Your State Library Commission has set six goals for the State Library and one of those goals is training. That says a lot about how important training is to the library community in our state. It says a lot that our state supports a certification program and that we have so many librarians that voluntarily participate in it. It says a lot that so many library board members seek out certification and eagerly attend training events; we have whole boards where every member has attained their certification! I just completed an intensive 4 days of training with the Summer Leadership Institute, and it never fails to impress me as I witness the diligence and determination of the Montana library community – to provide world-class services, to support each other, to continue to learn.
Week of Making
By Denise Blike
T.E.C.H. Lab AmeriCorp VISTA, Learning Lab Outreach & Mentor Coordination
Billings Public Library

What do copper tape circuits, art journals made out of discarded library books, and a sticky, Seuss-ian substance called “oobleck” have in common? All three activities were part of the Week of Making at the Billings Public Library during June 12-18. The Week of Making is a White House initiative to promote STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education in libraries, schools, museums, and makerspaces across the country. The Maker movement is rooted in D.I.Y. (Do-It-Yourself) culture where the “Maker” is the driver of innovation and invention, rather than a consumer. With a 21st century spin, the tools of Makers are 3D printers, laser cutters, robots, and programmable microcomputers the size of a credit card. As the cost of consumer-level equipment becomes more affordable, the opportunities are endless for Makers to turn their ideas into reality, with a hand in each step of the process along the way.

This learning-by-doing ethos was on display at the altered book workshop for all ages. Participants chose from a selection of withdrawn library books saved for their interesting covers or illustrations within. Library staff didn’t give direct instructions about what to do with the book; they just provided the means to create their own work of art. There was little hesitation among the crowd. Everyone dove in, creating new book covers featuring subjects like LEGO’s, cats, or Neil Gaiman, decorating pages with stickers, doodles, and quotations, or shellacking the inside with Mod Podge to create a blank slate. Library staff said that these are their favorite kind of programs. “It’s impossible to ever know what someone else is thinking,” said reference librarian Jennifer Wilke, “but when you watch a person create something, I think their creation is a glimpse into that person’s mind and imagination.”

Cats are the new subject of an altered book made at a workshop during the Week of Making.

Teens explore circuitry and make their drawings come to life with the help of copper tape, LEDs, and coin cell batteries.

Another altered book is illustrated and inscribed with quotes from Neil Gaiman’s work.

(continued next page)
Families who came to the “Villains and Viscosity” children’s program also tested the limits of their imagination as they learned about density and emulsions. At first, kids were skeptical about creating a lava lamp with vegetable oil, water, food coloring, and empty water bottles. Summer AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers who led the program reported that the kids were adamant that oil and water would mix completely. “Then their eyes got big as the two substances separated,” said Sadé Johnson. “Programs like these are always a big hit because kids like to go for it and get their hands dirty,” added Erin Shock. Kids also made gooey handfuls of “oobleck” (1 part water to 2 parts cornstarch) after reading *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* by Dr. Seuss. The rest of the week concentrated on other elements of S.T.E.A.M., like an introduction to coding via Minecraft and engineering challenges with LEGOs and popsicle stick catapults.

One of the final results from a LEGO engineering challenge for children.

Teens, too, had the chance to “Explore S.T.E.A.M.” as part of a series in the Teen Education & Creation Hub, a digital learning lab open to 13-18 year-olds. Every day was dedicated to projects that explored one of the initials for S.T.E.A.M. One of the more popular projects combined art and circuitry. Using a strip of double-sided copper tape, a coin cell battery, and two-pronged LEDs, teens folded a sheet of paper in half and drew a design or scene. Then on the back of the paper, they laid down a simple circuit with a carefully positioned LED. When the battery was inserted into the completed circuit, the scene came alive: a bunny rabbit’s nose glowed, and a sailboat avoided rocky shores thanks to the beam from a lighthouse tower. The best part of this program was that once the teens felt comfortable with the basics of making a circuit, they were free to improvise with their scenes, or move on to next level circuitry, like parallel circuits, or designs with multiple switches to control multiple LEDs.

Throughout the Week of Making, participants showed up to programs wanting to learn something new, whether it was what the “guts” of a computer looks like or how to use a Go Pro to film a 30 second tour of the library. And always, it was a matter of empowering participants with resources and a little direction, then stepping back and seeing how far they could go on their own.
Digitizing Montana’s Cultural Heritage
By Jennifer Birnel & Franky Abbott
Montana Memory Project Director & Project Manager
Montana State Library & Digital Public Library of America

Libraries and museums across the state of Montana own valuable cultural heritage materials that tell stories about the state’s history. Unfortunately, these photos, letters, journals, ledgers, and other types of content often live in boxes or filing cabinets, inaccessible to the public. Typically, few people know the items exist.

Enter the Montana Memory Project (MMP). The MMP is helping Montana’s libraries and museums digitize their cultural heritage collections and make them available online. By providing guidance about how to select and describe materials, and by connecting institutions with funding opportunities, the MMP strives to make this process of digitization easier for new institutions. So far, these efforts have helped get more and more of Montana’s cultural heritage content online, where it is discoverable and usable by researchers of all kinds, from students to genealogists. The MMP has also partnered with the Mountain West Digital Library (MWDL) and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) to bring these materials to regional and national audiences.

The MMP’s partnerships with MWDL and DPLA afforded Montana the opportunity to participate in the Public Library Partnership Project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This project brought twelve Montana librarians to the Montana State Library for a full day of training to learn how to create a digital collection. PLPP provided the funding for participants to digitize photos and other documents, which were added to the MMP and then shared with regionally with MWDL and nationally with DPLA.

The timeline to select and describe collection items and ship them for scanning was very tight—the participants had just five weeks to accomplish these tasks. Six tenacious participants agreed to complete a small project in this short time frame. Their collections were published on the MMP in March and April. But, as they learned during the workshop, publishing is not the final step in the process. Digital content has to be promoted so people can find and use it.

Many users of online content find items most useful when they are shared with context that explains how one fits into a larger story. They are often more interested in seeing a smaller number of well contextualized materials than sifting through an ocean of online content. When digitizing content, it is important to keep these users in mind and create strategies to engage them. An online exhibition provides one way to do this. Online exhibitions are like physical exhibitions in many ways. Curators select and arrange content from digital collections, such as photographs, posters, oral histories, films, and documents, with supporting text to tell a particular story about history and culture.

(continued on next page)
Historical collections can be used to tell all kinds of amazing stories. One of the challenges is picking just one story to tell. For PLPP, we went through the items digitized by Montana participants and outlined several possible narratives. From these, we chose a topic for a PLPP online exhibition. To build it, we broke this larger topic down into several themes and selected a broad list of items that could be used in them.

The librarians from the first training were invited to participate in a second training to learn how to create a digital exhibition. We showed participants in this training how to create an exhibition outline, select photos, and use a web platform called Omeka to publish the exhibition online. The day was a hands-on experience. Participants selected images from the lists we had created ahead of time for each theme and page of the exhibit and, in groups of two, they began researching and composing text for the themes.

The resulting exhibition, Boom and Bust: The Industries That Settled Montana, was published September 1, 2015 on the Digital Public Library of America website. Despite the many challenges, the group came together to produce an excellent story about Montana, why it was settled, and how its industries have impacted the environment and the people who live here. We’re so pleased with the final product. Congratulations to the librarians who worked on the exhibition and a big thanks to all the Montana cultural heritage institutions that allowed us to use their content to tell this story!
From the Editorial Desk

Hello MLA-ers!

If you’re anything like us, you’re probably thinking, “Wait, it’s October already?!!” Fall is such a wonderful yet incredibly busy season, which is why we thank you for reading the FOCUS. We know your time is precious and appreciate the fact that you stopped to review the news items provided by your fellow MLA members.

We also offer thanks to all who participated in the recent FOCUS questionnaire. Based on your feedback we will be working to bring you an updated layout with new features including MLA member spotlights, book reviews, best practices and other tantalizing items we hope you will find enjoyable and worthwhile.

In anticipation of the annual MLA conference we’d like to experiment by offering content that correlates with the ‘Empower! Protect! Inspire!’ theme. We encourage you to start thinking now about submitting a brief article that will help empower, protect or inspire fellow trustees, volunteers, librarians, and library lovers. It’s really not that hard. We bet you can come up with at least three things you are doing within your library right now that would benefit FOCUS readers. If you don’t have time to write, then show us what you’re doing. Send in photos! Your submissions will allow this newsletter to build upon the sense of camaraderie & support provided by our association and remind us all of the wonderful expertise, mentors, and opportunities available within the Montana library community.

Happy Autumn Everyone!

Caroline & Kendra

Montana Library Focus

[ISSN 1076-352X]

The Focus is an official publication of the Montana Library Association (MLA), and is published in collaboration with the members which it serves. You can look for new issues six times a year: in February, April, June, August, October, and December. With an online readership of over 500, the newsletter works to reflect, inspire, and give voice to the vibrant communities that exist in and around Montana’s libraries.

The Focus welcomes your input! To submit feedback, articles, reviews, inquiries, and ideas—or to place an ad or provide sponsorship—please contact the editorial staff directly:

Caroline Campbell (Editor)  
Missoula Public Library  
301 E. Main Street  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-258-3817 / Fax 406-728-5900  
caro1ine@missoula.lib.mt.us

Kendra Mullison (Assistant Editor)  
North Lake County Public Library District  
PO Box 820 / 2 – 1st Ave. E.  
Polson, MT 59860  
406-883-8225 / Fax 406-883-8239  
kendram@polson.lib.mt.us

Please send address changes to:

Debbi Kramer (Executive Assistant)  
Montana Library Association  
PO Box 1352  
Three Forks, MT 59752  
debkmla@hotmail.com

Montana Library Association  
PO Box 1352  
Three Forks, MT 59752